

Saturday, January 03, 2004

'Gang of gunners' takes on non-traditional missions

By: Sgt. Christopher Stanis, 1AD PAO

BAGHDAD, Iraq – After approximately eight months in Baghdad, soldiers of Task Force 1st Armored Division have realized that there is more to their role in Operation Iraqi Freedom than their military occupational specialties.

Most soldiers have taken on additional duties to support the overall mission in Iraq – from providing driver and gunner support on convoys to pulling guard duty at their forward operating bases.

Fort Riley, Kan., based 3rd Brigade Combat Team's fire support element is one example of troops who do what it takes to complete the mission.

Some of these non-traditional jobs include: working in the brigade civil-military operations section; public affairs representatives; information operations technicians; special projects office; assisting in the management of the brigade commander's emergency relief project (CERP) fund; working with the brigade intelligence section on the targeting process (of anti-coalition forces); and guarding the 3BCT forward operating base, driving and gunning for convoys, and even serving as kitchen patrols.

The brigade's fire support officer Maj. Clark Taylor and his soldiers do it all and they can still put "steel on target."

"Maj. Clark Taylor has become my 'go to' officer on the brigade staff. He is versatile and innovative, and has made immeasurable impacts to our combat, stability and security mission here in Baghdad, and the surrounding provinces," said Col. Russ Gold, brigade commander.

"His efforts along with his 'gang of gunners' have dramatically improved the quality of life for Iraqi citizens and more importantly, has saved our soldiers lives."

On top of everything else, the soldiers are still accomplishing their fire support mission.

For "a minimum of 18 hours a day for eight months, without a day off, these soldiers are responsible for most of the successful counter-fire missions (the division) has shot," Taylor said.

The Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System allows the soldiers to monitor Baghdad's artillery activity from the brigade tactical operations center (TOC.)

If an attack requiring counter-fire occurs, the FSE calls the 1AD FSE and division artillery to get approval and clear the airspace.

Approval is required from the brigade command group, but the mission is still sent to the howitzers to prepare to fire.

"That way once we get the O.K. all they have to do is drop the round in (and fire,)" said Staff Sgt. Dennis Kelley, a fire support sergeant with 3BCT.

Getting the guns ready before receiving the O.K. avoids fumbling around and lowers the enemy's chance of escape, said brigade fire support specialist, Spc. Paul Hammer.



The soldiers of Fort Riley, Kansas', 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Fire Support Element, nicknamed "the Gang of Gunners," pose around a 120 mm mortar tube recovered after a successful counter-fire mission.

If the target is not clear for fire, an end of mission report is sent, Kelley added.

He said the gunners, along with the firing batteries, have performed counter-fires in as little as four minutes after receiving the mission.

Hammer said he and the other soldiers in the section rotate in to work fire support one out of every three weeks.

"The rest of the time we're outside of the TOC serving as drivers and gunners for Maj. Taylor, whether it's taking him to his (district advisory council) meeting ... his (civil-military operations) meeting ... or his (information operations) meeting," he said.

Despite all of the additional duties, these soldiers aren't sent blindly into the wild.

"The leaders are not going to just throw us out there," Kelley said. "They make sure we have the proper training."

With all of the work there is to be done, Taylor said he could never do it without his soldiers.

"They handle (everything else) so I can focus on what has to get done," Taylor said.

And Taylor said he couldn't ask for a better group doing the job.

"They never complain, they always put a smile on my face and they accomplish the mission," Taylor said. "All soldiers (in Iraq) have proven why we're the best Army in the world. It's my honor to work with them."

The Old Ironsides Report

January 3, 2004

News...

British Airways Cancels Flight to D.C.

LONDON (AP) - British Airways canceled a London-to-Washington flight on Friday, the third time in three days that the flight was disrupted on security advice from the British government. Also, an Air France plane from New York to Paris made an emergency stop in Canada because of security concerns.

The flight troubles came amid a tightening of the security net over U.S. airspace around the New Year's holiday, a week and a half after the Bush administration raised the national terrorism alert to orange, its second-highest level.

Name Mix-up Behind Air France Groundings

PARIS (AP) - Six cases of mistaken identity were behind the pre-Christmas grounding of six Air France flights between Paris and Los Angeles over terrorism fears, a police official said Friday.

The names of six passengers were similar to those of terrorist suspects provided by the FBI, prompting the French government to halt the flights, the official said on condition of anonymity.

North Korea Invites U.S. to Nuclear Site

WASHINGTON (AP) - North Korea has invited a delegation of U.S. nuclear experts from outside the Bush administration to visit its main nuclear complex next week, U.S. officials said Friday.

It will be the first exposure by outside experts to the site since Pyongyang expelled U.N. monitors at the end of 2002, the officials said.

U.S. Criticized Over Iran Relief Efforts

BAM, Iran (AP) - Hardliners in Iran's government criticized U.S. relief efforts after the devastating earthquake that killed more than 30,000 people and flattened the ancient city of Bam, accusing Washington of trying to meddle in Tehran's affairs.

Economists Predict Drop in Unemployment

NEW YORK (AP) - Companies are expected to step up hiring in 2004 after a year in which household spending boosted the economy more than business investment, according to a group of economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal.

The 54 economists surveyed for the Journal's 2004 economic-forecast report said they thought the unemployment rate could fall to 5.5 percent by November.

Chaplain's thought for the day...

Peace Corps

There was a commercial years ago on TV by the Peace Corps: "It doesn't matter how long you live if you're not doing anything with your life."

"For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" Mark 8:36

Weightier issues...

Detroit Tops List of Fattest U.S. Cities

HOUSTON (AP) -- After three years of holding the title as America's fattest city, Houston shed the weight of the title. The city dropped to No. 2 on the Men's Fitness list of "fattest cities" in America. Detroit moved to the top spot.

Civic leaders credited initiatives started under Mayor Lee Brown's Get Lean Houston program and the work of the city's first fitness czar, former Mr. Universe Lee Labrada, for the accomplishment.

Labrada, who was criticized for using the city's fitness Web site to sell his supplements, has a 28-inch waist and 6 percent body fat. He was named fitness czar after the 2002 ranking.

"This is one championship title I don't mind giving up to another city," said city councilwoman Carol Alvarado. "Congratulations, Detroit."

But despite Houston's small step downward on the list, Dallas, San Antonio and Fort Worth moved up.

Dallas ballooned from last year's ninth fattest city to third; San Antonio went from No. 13 to No. 4; and Fort Worth jumped from 16th to sixth.

Men's Fitness has published the list of the top 25 fattest cities for six years. The report will appear in the February issue, which hits newsstands this month.

Peter Sikowitz, the magazine's editor-in-chief, applauded Houston's efforts to get fit. He said the city has improved its sports participation and promoted better nutritional habits.

To determine the top 25 fattest cities, the magazine looked at the 50 largest cities in 14 categories, such as air quality, climate, commute time, total number of fast-food and pizza restaurants, and number of health clubs and sporting goods stores.

"Habits are hard to change. For a city to go down a notch, it's significant," Sikowitz said. "It's not just a matter of vanity but it's about well-being. It's really about quality of life."

While some Houston residents ignored the list others took action.

The news prompted state Sen. Mario Gallegos to start his own diet plan in 2002. He eliminated carbohydrates and dropped from 285 pounds to about 250 pounds.

He acknowledges he strayed from the plan during the holidays.

With Houston changing its oversized ways, Labrada said Wednesday he plans to take the health and fitness campaign he created for the Bayou City to a national audience.

"It's not one city's problem, it's America's problem," said Labrada, referring to the nation's obesity rate. "People needed to know there was a problem. There's still work to be done."

Safety message...

IN 2003 FOUR AMV ACCIDENTS
CLAIMED SEVEN LIVES

- REDUCE SPEED
- WEAR SEAT BELTS & KEVLAR
- DRIVE DEFENSIVELY AT ALL TIMES

LET'S MAKE 2004 ACCIDENT FREE

The Old Ironsides Report

January 3, 2004

myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: SATURDAY, JANUARY 03, 2004				As of: Friday, January 02, 2004 8:28:48 PM		
Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
00:00		HEADLINE NEWS	THE LIFE OF MAMMALS			00:00
00:30	COLLEGE FOOTBALL - 2004 PEACH BOWL: CLEMSON VS TENNESSEE	TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO			HEADLINE NEWS	00:30
01:00			BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER : - INTO THE WOODS		LESTER HOLT LIVE	01:00
01:30		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN		FRANKLIN : - FRANKLIN'S PUMPKIN/FRANKLIN'S JUG BAND		01:30
02:00			IRON CHEF : - STRAWBERRY/SAKAI VS MASAYO WAKI	ROCKET POWER : - LESS THAN FULL OTTO/ CARD SHARKED	HEADLINE NEWS	02:00
02:30		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD		THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	02:30
03:00		HEADLINE NEWS	THE VIEW	YU-GI-OHI (TV-7): - EVIL SPIRIT OF THE RING	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT	03:00
03:30		ESPNEWS		THE PROUD FAMILY : - ONE IN A MILLION	CBS EVENING NEWS	03:30
04:00	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - BIG XII: VILLANOVA @ KANSAS	COLLEGE FOOTBALL - 2004 FIESTA BOWL: KANSAS STATE VS OHIO STATE	LIVING BETTER WITH CARRIE WIATT	COLLEGE FOOTBALL - 2004 FIESTA BOWL: KANSAS STATE VS OHIO STATE	THE NEWSHOUR	04:00
04:30			HOMES WITH STYLE : - NEW YORK ROOFTOP GARDENS			04:30
05:00			WHILE YOU WERE OUT		HANNITY & COLMES	05:00
06:00	NHL - COLORADO AVALANCHE @ VANCOUVER CANUCKS		TRADING SPACES: 100 GRAND		THE NEWS WITH BRIAN WILLIAMS	06:00
07:00					BET NIGHTLY NEWS	07:00
07:30		ESPNEWS		HOW TO BOIL WATER : - PASS THE PASTA	NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT	07:30
08:00		HEADLINE NEWS	THE DIVISION : - THE FEAR FACTOR	WWE RAW!	LARRY KING LIVE	08:00
08:30	ESPNEWS	HEADLINE NEWS				08:30
09:00	NFL TOTAL ACCESS	BEAR IN THE BIG BLUE HOUSE (YR. 6) : - A VISIT TO THE GENERAL STORE	DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE	TRADING SPACES FAMILY : - LOUISVILLE: ROYCEWOOD ROAD	NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN	09:00
09:30		FRANKLIN : - FRANKLIN'S PUMPKIN/FRANKLIN'S JUG BAND				09:30
10:00	SPORTSCENTER	ROCKET POWER : - LESS THAN FULL OTTO/ CARD SHARKED		HEADLINE NEWS	PAULA ZAHN NOW	10:00
10:30		THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS		NAVY/MARINE CORP NEWS - PROD YEAR		10:30
11:00	COLLEGE FOOTBALL - 2004 COTTON BOWL: MISSISSIPPI VS OKLAHOMA STATE	YU-GI-OHI (TV-7): - EVIL SPIRIT OF THE RING	THE VIEW	ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT	NIGHTLINE	11:00
11:30		THE PROUD FAMILY : - ONE IN A MILLION			ARMY NEWSWATCH	11:30
12:00		TRADING SPACES FAMILY : - LOUISVILLE: ROYCEWOOD ROAD	LIVING BETTER WITH CARRIE WIATT	HEADLINE NEWS	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS	12:00
12:30			HOMES WITH STYLE : - NEW YORK ROOFTOP GARDENS	ESPNEWS		12:30
13:00		OPERATION JUNKYARD : - CANNON	WHILE YOU WERE OUT	ONE ON ONE : - TAKE THIS JOB AND LOVE IT	THE O'REILLY FACTOR	13:00
13:30		HOW TO BOIL WATER : - PASS THE PASTA		ACCORDING TO JIM : - YOU GOTTA LOVE SOMEBODY (PT. 1)		13:30
14:00		ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT	TRADING SPACES: 100 GRAND	THE PRACTICE : - SPECIAL DELIVERIES	DATELINE NBC	14:00
14:30	SPORTSCENTER					14:30
15:00		WWE RAW!		LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT : - APPEARANCES		15:00
15:30	COLLEGE FOOTBALL - 2004 FIESTA BOWL: KANSAS STATE VS OHIO STATE					15:30
16:00		ONE ON ONE : - TAKE THIS JOB AND LOVE IT	THE DIVISION : - THE FEAR FACTOR	HEADLINE NEWS	MSNBC LIVE	16:00
16:30		ACCORDING TO JIM : - YOU GOTTA LOVE SOMEBODY (PT. 1)		SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE (03'-04') : - JACK BLACK/JOHN MAYER		16:30
17:00		THE PRACTICE : - SPECIAL DELIVERIES	DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE		SATURDAY TODAY	17:00
18:00		LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT : - APPEARANCES		LIVE IN HOLLYWOOD		18:00
19:00	NFL COUNTDOWN	HEADLINE NEWS	THE VIEW	THE ENTERTAINERS	WALL STREET JOURNAL	19:00
19:30		NAVY/MARINE CORP NEWS - PROD YEAR			AMERICA'S BLACK FORUM	19:30
20:00	COLLEGE FOOTBALL - 2004 HUMANITARIAN BOWL: GEORGIA TECH VS TULSA	SPORTSCENTER	LIVING BETTER WITH CARRIE WIATT	HOOR OF POWER - THE POSITIVE POWER OF GOD	DATELINE NBC	20:00
20:30			HOMES WITH STYLE : - NEW YORK ROOFTOP GARDENS	CELEBRATION OF VICTORY : - THE FAITH FIGHT		20:30
21:00		NBA SHOOTAROUND	WHILE YOU WERE OUT	CORAL RIDGE HOUR - WHO SHALL CONDEMN US?		21:00
21:30		NBA - PHILADELPHIA 76ERS @ SAN ANTONIO SPURS		THE WORD IN THE WORLD : - THE STORY OF JOSEPH		21:30
22:00			TRADING SPACES: 100 GRAND	CAFE VIDEO : - DELVE A LITTLE DEEPER	HEADLINE NEWS	22:00
22:30				WISHBONE : - THE IMPAWSSIBLE DREAM	ARMY NEWSWATCH	22:30
23:00				HEADLINE NEWS	FOX NEWS LIVE	23:00
23:30	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - ATLANTIC 10: ALABAMA VS XAVIER			ARMY NEWSWATCH		23:30

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OLE MISS (16) 31



CLEMSON 27



OKLAHOMA ST. (21) 28



TENNESSEE (6) 14

SUNDAY:



LSU (2)



OKLAHOMA (3)

2003 NFL PLAYOFFS

Saturday



TITANS



COWBOYS



RAVENS



PANTHERS

Sunday



SEAHAWKS



BRONCOS



PACKERS



COLTS